INTERIM

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AUGUST KATAU—
Concerning the Other Face of God

He is a monster with two faces,
like all of us perhaps,
in any case like God.—*Elie Faure.*

Beneath the soul-repelling wound of god
I wither, and upon the lip of night
I lean and search the cracks of solitude
seeking the momentary touch of light;
but while I stalk the grooves of black and white
I find no peace upon the cell of clay
and turn instead to other realms where bright
from absolution my eyeless soul may stray
in many landscapes that are yet untouched by day.

Thus rising wingless from debris I sift
through columns of the sun that move and cry
in violent colors on the sea or lift
from pulsing strings their light into the sky;
or falling through humidity I die
upon the points of some forgotten tree
growing within a jungle in the eye
of god, peripheral, which does not see,
and dead within this globe I dream eternity.

And always sempiternally there stares
that unseeing eye which looks through me
and I throw it the shape my body wears;
and though I plunge the shaft of hell I see
always that eye upon some flower or tree,
and though I leap the broadest gorge I find
that I have only fallen easily
into the wound of god that breaks the mind
in particles for touch, but to the senses blind.

I rise deathlike in dreams above the sun
and wake to find my body melting cold
into the fire of god who has undone
the samite tapestries that I have rolled
before eyepupil's view, and weak and old
I lift my fingers to the light and yell
to the immobile god who in the folds
of landscapes and the sea's enclosing shell
turns one thin face to heaven and one face to hell.

JAY REESE—Black Bastard

It was in the years when men hunted for jobs that didn't exist and young boys left home because there was no food on the tables and men and women clung to pitiful dreams of work and happiness just up the line. It was in the years when hunger lay over the land like a heavy storm cloud and loneliness was just the next morning you had to wake up to. It was in Raleigh, North Carolina . . .

. . . row after row of red boxcars lined the tracks from the terminal close to town to the yard's edge beyond the high cement walls. From each side of the yards cindered grass ran up the bank emplacements and then stretched out over a narrow level of earth to the unpainted shacks and tool sheds. A few scraggy jack pines lined the bank along the yard and merged into a fairly healthy stand of yellow pine beyond. A white autumn moon, occasionally visible behind the moving black cloud formations, ran streaks of white over the cars and tracks. Swinging lanterns flashed yellow in the darkness. Men moved in the shadows among the cars.

As if by a pre-arranged signal, locomotives throughout the yard began letting steam and turning their great pistons. Many giant headlights were turned on, and the long empty rails leading into the pine country glistened with bright yellow light. On the far edge of the yards the Red Ball Limited rolled slowly into movement; its wheels turned easily on the clean rails, its headlights colored the tracks ahead and the moving men.

As it began its slow roll from the yard a figure in white shirt slipped out from behind a clump of bushes, hopped quickly over the tracks, and trotted along side the moving train toward the caboose. After he had passed nearly ten cars he came to an open one; he then changed his direction to correspond to the train's end and, after a few paces, swung himself up easily through the open doors. He stood leaning against the door for a few seconds, adjusting his vision to the darkened interior. As his eyes became accustomed to the darkness, he saw a man lying on heavy wrapping in one end of the car. He unstrapped his pack and slowly walked over to him, sat down in the straw and paper, and lighted a cigarette.

He was a boy, not more than sixteen, sandy-haired and tanned from the hot southern sun. His face was clear complexioned, his features well-formed and attractive. He smoked rather nervously, taking short puffs on the cigarette and blowing the smoke out quickly without inhaling; and he smoked evidently not because he enjoyed smoking but because he felt that it lent him an air of experience and nonchalance that his youthful face and thin body did not. He cast apprehensive glances at the fat, swarthy-skin man lying close to him. His thin body trembled slightly, perhaps from the chill air, perhaps from the nearness of a man he did not know. He was afraid of the stranger, but more afraid of lying in the darkness alone. So he sat huddled against the side of the car in the straw and paper in silence.

The man at his feet was heavy bearded and evidently of Greek descent. He lay on his side, his head cupped in the palm of his right hand. His trousers were unbuttoned, and his left hand moved slowly over his belly and inner thighs. Breathing heavily in body excitement, he looked up at the young boy beside him and followed his every movement.

There was a scuffling of feet on the cinders outside the open car, and a girl suddenly appeared climbing over the floor boards. She got to the floor and then lay there unable to move.

The boy ran quickly to the doors, lifted her shoulders to drag her in. But as he did, her feet came to the floor level with the car and she was gently lifted in. A thin bearded man in his twenties jumped into the car after her.

"Thanks, boy. I knew that was going to be tough. Thanks, thanks a lot." He put his arm around the girl and aided her over to the far corner. "Now don't worry, honey. We'll be in Washington in the morning. Everything'll be all right."

The boy followed them to the corner, staring at the girl.

"What 'a ya looking at, kid? Go on back and sit down. I said thanks."

The boy strolled back to the other corner, looking over his shoulder at the big, fat belly of the girl. The fat Greek moved closer to him.

The train picked up momentum and passed the outlying sheds and dimly lighted shacks. As it rounded the curve into the pine country, there was the sound of feet moving again and the scuffle of cinders outside the car. A pack tossed into the car rolled across the floor to the center boards, and a tall thin angular man swung in after it. He stood in the center of the car, swayed with the train's movement, and peered into the darkened corners. His long hands and thin wrists dangled loosely out of an undersized blue mackinaw. His dirty black trousers hung loosely over his mud-caked, worn-out shoes. An old felt hat was placed at a jaunty angle on the back of his head, and loose strands of brown hair fell out from under it over his forehead. His features were sharp and emaciated.

"Almost a full house, eh?"

He swayed unsteadily and, when no one answered, took a full pint of whiskey from his hip pocket. "Anybody want a drink?"

Without waiting for a reply he unscrewed the top, took two long swallows, and put the bottle back in his pocket. He then wiped his mouth with his hand, picked up his pack, and sat down against the car side across from the open door in the thin stream of moonlight that ran diagonally across the floor.

The train passed the last house and curved into the pine country. The cars jolted against each other as it picked up speed for its long northern run through the night and lonely Carolina forests. The tall, thin man sat slouched against the car side. The girl lay in the darkened corner, huddled in the arms of her companion, covered with the thick wrapping paper. The fat Greek squirmed up to the boy who sat shivering in the cold night air.

"Cold, kid?"

The boy nodded, still somewhat frightened.

"Come on . . . get under the paper with me. It's warm here. Come on . . . don't be afraid . . . come on."

The boy hesitated a moment, then stretched out beside the Greek, who covered him with the paper, wrapped his fat arms around him and drew him close to his fleshy body.

In the rear of the train, high on the catwalk, another figure stepped lightly over the split boards and hopped from one car to the other toward the engine.

At the center of each car he would step over to the side on the sloping roof and dangle his feet against the side of the car. If he found no opening, he would lean over the side and peer up ahead to try to see an open car. As the train rounded a curve he saw the open doors of the empty boxcar far ahead, close to the engine. He rested a few minutes, noted the location of the car, and then started his slow, agile movement over the catwalk.

Far beyond the yards. the train settled down to a fast, easy roll as it moved deeper into the forest. The cloud formations passed far to north and the full moon came out low over the tree tops, flooding the night with its crystal-clear white light. The moving figure on the train top stopped for a moment on the catwalk. He spread his legs wide and dug his heavy cleated high shoes into the board tops. His thin grey and black striped trousers just reached his shoes, narrowed at his ankles, and then spread out around the shoe tops, as if there heavy iron bands were once fastened. His denim shirt was sleeveless and open at the front. He stood well over six feet, a giant negro.

Stretching out his long powerful arms, he flexed his shoulder muscles and twisted his ham-like hands. He opened his mouth wide and sucked in the cool Carolina air, his nostrils dilating rapidly, and rubbed his hands over his short cropped stubble of hair. He unfastened a canteen from his belt and took a long swallow of water. Then he fastened it again and walked slowly over the catwalk to the open boxcar. He seemed like a great animal that had broken out of long confinement.

When he reached the car he stood for a few minutes on the slanting roof and breathed deeply. Then he crouched on the edge, grabbed hold of the ledge, and swung himself into the open car.

The girl let out a muffled scream of fright, and her companion rose and stood in front of her, trembling, nervous. The tall, thin man against the car side instinctively leaped to his feet and quickly stepped out of the light into the shadows. The boy rolled over on his stomach and lay with wide-open eyes, staring at the negro silhouetted in the moonlight. The fat Greek turned his head for a moment and then looked back at the boy. He drew him closer against his body.

The negro took a small, bright flashlight from his pocket and lighted the corners. The light rested for a moment on the boy and the Greek lying together under the heavy paper. Then it moved against the side opposite the doors and caught the thin man crouched against the wall. It moved over the walls into the far empty corner and then finally came to rest on the young girl lying in the corner and her companion standing in front of her. Then it was extinguished.

The negro walked over to the open doors and pulled the sliding door farthest from the girl wide open. He stood for a moment in the white moonlight which flooded nearly half the car and then sat down, back against the door ledge, looking out into the deep, silent forests.

The boy turned from the negro and went back to sleep. The girl's companion sat down beside her, lifted her head on to his lap, and stretched out his legs. The tall, thin man walked out of the shadows and sat down in the light opposite the negro, pulled out his pint of whiskey, and took a long drink.

"Had me worried for a minute, Mac . . . Want a drink?"

The negro did not reply. So the thin man set the bottle between his legs and rolled a cigarette. After he had drawn on it two or three times, the negro stirred uneasily and finally rose and walked over to him. Without speaking he stretched out his hand. The thin man handed him the bottle. When he had swallowed twice, the negro handed the half-empty pint back. "Makings?" he asked.

The thin man handed him his tobacco and cigarette papers. The negro rolled two cigarettes, mumbled thanks, and returned to the open doors.

The train rolled easily over the rails, whistling occasionally. The boxcar swayed rhythmically, and the wheels beat out an endless, soothing, clickety-click. The thin man swallowed often from the bottle, smoked hurriedly, and glanced often toward the corner where the girl lay in the arms of her companion. Frequently he started up, only to slide back to the floor. Then after a few more swallows of whiskey he got up and stumbled to the center of the car toward the girl. He stood still for a moment and then walked toward her. The bearded youth watched him closely from the darkness and drew his forelegs back closer to his body; he lay the girl gently on the floor.

The negro swung his right leg up to the car floor and flipped his cigarette high into the air. There was a spark of red in the white moonlight as the train hurled by it, and the thin man paused to see what it was.

"Sit down, white trash." The negro spoke clearly, enunciating each word.

"Ah, take it easy . . . It's none of your goddam business," the thin man replied. He moved a pace nearer the girl, but now hesitantly.

The negro swung himself up quickly, effortlessly, and in one agile leap lighted in front of the bearded man, between him and the thin man. "Sit down white trash," he repeated.

The thin man lost his balance as the train wheeled around a curve, staggered for a few seconds before righting himself, and then slouched over to the side of the car like a frightened animal.

The negro turned to the couple in the corner, flashed on the light and walked slowly over to them. The girl's companion jumped up quickly and stood in front of her, nervous and frightened. But the negro paid him no attention as he turned the light on the pregnant girl and studied the outline of her large body. "How along is she?" he asked her companion.

"I . . . I don' know, eight months maybe. It's all right . . . we'll be in Washington tomorrow. My brother lives there . . . he's got a good job. He'll take care of her."

The negro flashed out the light and returned to his seat by the open car door. The girl's companion sat down beside her with a strange expression on his face. The thin man dropped into a drunken sleep. The Greek wrapped his legs around the sleeping boy as the train whistled sharply in the night. The car swayed easily; the endless clickety-click of the wheels over the rails became a cadenced rhythm.

The dark pine trees passed by in the white night, and the minutes. Occasionally above the subdued sounds of the train wheels there were audible the muffled grunts of the Greek as he embraced the boy. Suddenly the boy rolled away from him, uttering a plaintive cry of protest, and lay half out of the heavy

paper in the streak of light across the floor boards. The Greek watched him for a long time and then moved over close to him. "Get under the paper, kid. It's warm." The boy hesitated. "Come on . . . get under."

The boy slid down under the paper and shortly dozed off to sleep The Greek lay beside him listening to his breathing. When it became heavy and even, he moved closer to him, wrapped his fat arm around him, and drew him tight against his body. And the minutes passed.

The boy uttered another cry of protest and half rose from the floor. The Greek drew him down and held him close. But he protested violently and tried to free himself.

"No . . . no . . . let me go!"

"Lay down, kid . . . get under da paper."

The boy laid down again, for a moment, then recoiled from the fat body beside him. "No . . . don't do that! Let me go . . ."

The negro swung his leg up to the floor and rose softly, looked toward the two huddled figures in the darkened corner, and then walked over to them. "Leave dat boy go!"

The Greek unstretched himself, got up on his hands and knees, and as he slowly raised himself, snapped open a jackknife. "Get the hell outa here nigger . . . you don't frighten me."

The boy drew back into the darkness until he felt the car wall. The negro moved quickly, grabbed the wrist of the Greek with his left hand, and with his right, drew a long knife from his belt. The Greek fell with a heavy thud to the floor; his knife rolled across the floor boards. The negro pressed his knee hard into his fat belly and held the knife against the Greek's throat. The boy stood frightened in the shadows as he watched the Greek's eyes bulge and heard the grunts of protest from his thick lips.

After a moment the negro got up and kicked the jackknife across the floor boards to the open door. It flashed for a moment as it rolled off the boards into the night. The Greek lay gasping for breath, but unharmed.

"Stay away from him, boy," the negro said, turning to the boy pressed against the wall. Then he walked over the doorway and sat down, dangling his leg in the air. The boy followed him after a moment and stretched out in the ray of moonlight across the car floor, between the negro and the thin man sleeping against the car wall.

Heavy dark clouds covered the moon, and the open freight car was darkened from one end to the other. The girl in the corner moved uneasily and screamed in the darkness. Her companion awakened and drew her closer to him. Again she screamed and rolled away from him. The thin man slouched against the wall awakened from his heavy sleep and rubbed his eyes. The boy sat up frightened, staring into the dark corner. The negro swung his leg up to the floor and moved softly over the boards to the corner where the girl lay.

The girl's companion did not rise to meet him or to stand in front of the girl. He sat in the corner, trembling and nervous, pressing the girl closer to him. So softly and quickly did the negro move that the bearded man was not aware of him until he flashed the light on the girl. But even then he did not move.

The negro dropped to his knees and felt the protruding belly of the girl. Her companion stirred uneasily and finally grabbed the negro's arm. "Keep your hands off her."

The negro flashed the light directly into his face. "Your girl's goin' to have a baby, white man." He pushed him gently back against the wall and then got up and walked over to the thin man.

"Here, white trash," he said, handing him the canteen, take dis up to de engine and fill it with hot water."

"Stop calling me white trash."

"Go along with ya."

"I can't get up to the roof."

The negro pushed him over to the open door, wrapped his right arm around his legs, and pushed him up to the roof ledge. And the thin man climbed up. His footsteps on the catwalk overhead were audible for a minute as he adjusted himself to the darkness and swaying train. They were lost in the clicking of the wheels as he jumped to the next car.

The negro waited until his footsteps were no longer audible before returning to the girl. He watched the spasmodic movement of her body for a long time and hummed a tune that rose above the guttural sound of the girl's moaning, the light, sharp sound of the fast-moving wheels, and the occasional clinking noise of the heavy iron car locks sliding against each other. It was a deep, resonant tone, almost a chant.

The young boy stood beside the girl, fascinated and rather afraid of something he only dimly understood. He watched the negro outlined faintly in the shadows of the flashlight. Occasionally the deep-throated snore of the Greek sleeping in the other end of the car broke through the groans and the sliding steel and the chant.

The train rolled easily over the rails north into the Carolina woods. The minutes slid by like the fast-moving wheels. Occasionally the clouds broke and a thin ray of white moonlight was streaked across the floor boards into the corner where the girl lay. In the light flashes her bearded companion was outlined. His left arm supported the girl's shoulders and rested on his left leg, which was curved under the girl's head. His body was trembling lightly as if from a nervous chill. His eyes were watered and his thin beard wet from tears. The girl bit into his right forearm which lay lightly across her body. Her teeth marks were visible all along the meaty part of his arm, just below the elbow. The flesh was torn into in a few places, and blood filled the teeth pockets in the flesh and streamed down his arm.

The negro pressed his ear to the girl's belly frequently, and occasionally he moved his large hands over the soft, fat flesh, pushing it one way then another as if he were moulding a piece of soft clay into form. Often he glanced up to the car top and listened for the sound of footsteps above the inarticulate sobbing of the girl and the rhythmic click of the train wheels.

He got up from his crouching position in front of the girl and walked over to the far corner. He flashed his light into the corner and then ran it along the floor against the edge. He walked all around the car, occasionally stooping

down and picking up pieces of straw. In the far end, near the sleeping Greek, he picked up two chicken feathers. Then he tore loose some heavy paper from the wall and walked back to the girl's corner.

'Here, boy . . . hold de light."

The boy took the flashlight, held it tightly in both hands, and flashed it on the floor in front of the girl. The negro sat down near the white center of light and began to sing softly. He took out his knife and cut long thin strips of paper about an eighth of an inch wide. Then he slid his fingers over the paper strips until they curled up at the end. He split the straws and mashed the sharp ends. From his shoe he removed a heavy cord which he had used for a shoestring; with it he tied the feathers and straw and thin strips of paper together at the top so that they made a duster. He held it up in the breeze; the curled paper danced; the feathers and straw waved gently. Then he handed it to the girl's companion. 'Don't lose dis, white man."

The bearded man took it in his free hand and held it up to the light. "What's this for?" he asked.

"Dat's to tickle her with, white man."

The girl's companion looked at the negro, then back at the duster. The negro just smiled.

There was a scuffle of feet above on the catwalk and a moment later the thin man swung into the car. He held the empty canteen in his hand.

"Where's de water, white trash?"

"They told me to go to hell," the thin man replied, backing away from the negro.

The negro grabbed the canteen from him, got the flashlight from the boy, and pulled himself up onto the car roof. His light footsteps were barely audible as he walked over the catwalk toward the locomotive.

The thin man sat down against the side. The young boy remained by the girl, fascinated with her twisting body and deep-throated cries. The Greek snored in the far corner. The minutes passed, like the fast-moving wheels, and after a time the boy sat down near the girl and dozed off.

Suddenly the girl screamed, and the boy jumped away frightened. He ran to the door and tried to climb to the roof. But unable to raise himself on the swaying door, he slid back down to the floor and remained there, afraid to go back to the corner. The thin man got up hesitantly and walked over to the girl, peering into the darkness. Again the girl screamed, kicked her legs, and twisted her fleshy body from the arms of her companion.

There was a scuffle of feet on the sloping roof, and the negro leaned into the car, holding a large tin-can of steaming water. "Take dis, boy."

The boy reached up and grabbed the can by the sides. The hot tin seared his hands, and some water splashed out as he withdrew them. The negro cursed softly and handed the can down again. This time the boy wrapped a handkerchief around his hands and grabbed the can by the wire handle. When he had a firm grip, the negro released the can and dropped into the car.

"Here, boy, hold de light," he said, taking the can from the boy. "White trash . . . what ya doin'?"

The thin man stepped out of the darkness behind the negro. "I thought I told you not to call me white trash!"

The negro sat down without replying and began to chant. The girl uttered a muffled scream. Then another, loud and piercing. When it subsided into low guttural moans and the spasmodic movement of her legs and body stopped, he lifted her light, loose cotton dress above her legs and began to move her sóft belly with his strong hands.

The girl's companion held her tightly. Both of his arms were around her. His head was lowered, and he sobbed softly. In the rays of the light his tears were clearly visible as they slid down over the short stubble of beard.

The negro held his hands in the light, away from the girl. "White trash . . . pour some water."

The thin man lifted the large can and poured the steaming hot water on the negro's hands. The negro shook them, held them directly in front of the flashlight for a minute, and then began to probe gently.

The girl's screams continued. Her body began to twist again. And the baby's head emerged partly from the womb. The negro looked up at the girl's companion. "Tickle her, white man."

The bearded man picked up the little duster the negro had made. He held it loosely in his right hand, not knowing what to do with it. "Where . . . where do I . . ."

"On de belly dere. Go on . . . tickle her," the negro replied.

The girl's companion moved the duster over her bare belly. The thin strands of paper danced and the feathers and straws spiralled over her skin. The girl's sobs and screams were caught in her throat. She began to laugh. At first, her laughter was nothing more than whimperings. But then as the paper strips danced over her belly and the feathers and straws whirled, she laughed as she had screamed, full and deep-throated. Her whole body moved in laughter. It twisted and turned and rose above the floor boards in convulsive body laughter. And the baby came into the hands of the negro.

He held it in his large right hand; his left he extended to the thin man, who poured hot water on it. The boy stared at the blood-covered baby. His stomach contracted, his face turned white, and his hands trembled. The flashlight began to waver.

"Hold dat light still, boy."

The boy gripped the flashlight tightly with both hands and focused it on the baby. The negro held his hand in the light a moment longer and then cleaned the baby. When the tissue and blood were all removed, he took out his long knife, dipped it in the can of steaming water, and cut the umbilical cord. The boy nearly dropped the flashlight. The light spread up against the car side, leaving the negro and baby in the half-darkness.

"Hold dat light still, boy!"

The boy trembled, bit hard on his nether lip, and tried not to cry. He centered the light on the baby again and forced his eyelids open. The negro tied the cord, turned the baby upside down, and hit it lightly on the nates. In a moment its cry rose above the sobbing of the young mother, above the click of the train wheels and the sliding noise of the iron couplings.

"Well, I'll be damned!" the thin man exclaimed.

"Boy, have ya got a clean towel in yah pack?"

The boy nodded, handed the flashlight to the thin man, and got up from the floor. He walked unsteadily to the pack in the center of the car near the door. For a moment he stood doubled over as if he were going to throw-up.

His stomach turned and a strange, sickening feeling ran through his groin and throat. He stumbled to the open door and leaned out into the cool, black night. The air refreshed him, and after a moment he went back to the pack, rifled through it quickly, and returned to the negro with a white linen towel. The negro wrapped the screaming baby in it and handed him to his mother, who took him to her breasts.

A stillness pervaded the boxcar for the first time in nearly an hour, and in the strange silence, the men stood awkwardly, looking at each other. The negro watched the mother and baby a minute and then poured the water from the can and canteen onto the floor boards, washed away the blood and matter, and covered the floor with paper. He turned the light on the boy, who stood trembling, ash white and cold.

"White trash, gib de boy a drink."

"Stop calling me white trash," the thin man replied, handing the bottle to the boy.

The boy took it hesitantly and held it, not knowing quite what to do.

"Go on, kid, drink some. It'll do you good."

The boy swallowed a large mouthful and a second later spit up some of it.

"Hell, kid, don't waste it. Here, give it back."

The boy handed the bottle to the thin man, who swallowed twice and then passed it to the negro. The negro emptied it in one long drink and tossed it through the doorway. Then he and the thin man rolled cigarettes and strolled to their old places. The boy stood alone in the darkness. But after a few minutes he went to his pack and stretched out. He was still cold and trembling and wanted very much to cry. But the tears wouldn't come. Inside he felt all choked up.

The night returned to its own sounds: the cadenced click of the wheels, the ryhthmic sliding of the couplings, the lonely, haunting sound of the engine whistle. The train swayed lightly over the rails and sped deeper into the pine country, north to the state line. Dark cloud clusters hid the moon, and the tall yellow pines were silhouetted faintly in the darkness. Occasionally the negro stood up in the doorway peering into the forest. His low chant had changed to a lively tune, and there was a restlessness in his shifting movements that had not appeared earlier. The country seemed familiar to him, and frequently he leaned out to look ahead of the train as if he were trying to spot landmarks. When the face of the forest remained unchanged, he sat down and relaxed, dangling his leg out the car.

But not far to the north there was a break in the forests, where a narrow country road crossed the tracks and a log general store sprawled near the tracks on the west side and a small yellow painted shack in the clearing on the east side. Here, just a few miles south of the North Carolina border, three big, black touring cars stopped at the rail tracks where the narrow dirt road crossed them. Their engines turned lightly as the motors idled. Men climbed out and stood silently in the center of the road, in the bright moonlight, in the deep pine woods, their long-barreled rifles and sawed-off shotguns resting easily over their forearms, their pointed badges shining silver in the moonlight. The first car moved across the tracks, the second pulled off the road edge against the trees, the third went back on the road about twenty-five yards and

turned sideways to block the road. The men, over twenty in number, fanned out on both sides of the tracks.

A quarter mile south of the crossroads one of the men stuck a red flare in the track bed. In front of the yellow shacks north of the crossing he planted another.

The men walked about in the white moonlight and the sulphurous red glare of the flares. There was anxiety and nervousness in their movements. In the way they paced back and forth on the cinder roadbed, in the way they smoked their corn cob pipes and drew on their long black cigars. Tall powerful men, nervous in the moonlight, anxious to kill, afraid of being killed.

A stoop-shouldered man with a wide-brimmed, high felt hat resting on the side of his head and a gold star shining on his open vest, moved from one side of the tracks to the other, from one group of men to another. The safety lock on his long-barreled rifle was already turned off and his revolver already pulled half out of its holster.

The train moved north through the pine woods. And the men waited.

In the distance, the sound of the train whistle broke through the stillness, and the men dispersed to line the tracks between the red flares.

The train rounded a curve and picked up speed as it hurled over the mile stretch of straight roadbed that crossed the border. The clouds hung low in the sky, just above the forest line, and the moon bathed the countryside in white light. Around the curve, the brilliant red flares illuminated the tracks and the line of waiting men. The sounds of sliding iron on steel rails filled the night silence. The cars pushed into one another as the train slowed quickly, and the great iron couplings clanked into each other all along the line.

The car jerked violently. The Greek slammed up against the carside, tore loose from the heavy paper, and rose to a half-crouch, balancing himself. The boy rolled toward the open door and got up quickly. The young mother, cushioned against her companion, was tossed hard into the corner walls. The thin man sprawled onto the floor and lay half awake, shaking his head.

A sudden whistle scream brought the negro to his feet. He moved quickly to the doorway, slid the door back farther, and leaned out into the bright moonlight, the flashing lights along the roadbed, and the brilliant red flares.

As the big locomotive slowed down to an even speed and passed the first red flare, a look of abject fear covered the negro's face. He stood still but a moment, and then bent his knees to jump. Two powerful flashlights from the road caught him in a cross-light. He stepped back into the shadows, close behind the car door, and watched the men and the moving flashlights along the track.

The flashlights continued to play through the open doors. At the crossroads, the engine slowed down, and men signaled it ahead slowly with their lights. In a few minutes the open boxcar rolled onto the tracks over the narrow road. Up ahead two men boarded the locomotive, and the train came to a grinding stop.

The men spread out in a wide semi-circle over the road around the big touring car which blocked it thirty yards from the tracks. The heavy, stoop-shouldered man with the gold star dangling from his open vest moved along the train until he came to the open car. Three men followed him. They bent down below the train and pulled the car doors back. The open car was instantly flooded with moonlight and the brighter light from the long-handled flashlights.

The fat Greek was caught in the center of the lights, knees bent in a crouching position. The boy was standing near the north door, shielding his eyes from the lights. The thin man was sprawled out in the center.

"All right, get down outa there!"

The Greek waddled to the doorway and dropped down; the thin man followed. Two men pulled them down below the train and led them across the road behind the men who lined the road-edge. The boy dropped down onto the cinders. The gold-star man grabbed him.

"Nigger in there, boy?"

The boy stood trembling, staring at the men and bright rifles and flashlights.

"Don't lie to me boy. I'll put you in jail. Is a nigger in there?"

"Y . . . Yes, sir."

"All right, go along up there with the rest of them."

The boy walked along the train, over the road to where the Greek and thin man stood.

A man walked to the south end of the car and flashed his light into it. It picked up the bearded man lying out from the corner.

"Here's another one, Tom."

The gold-star man stooped below the open car doors until he reached the man with the flashlight. Then he stood up, flattened himself against the car side, and peered into the car.

"Com'on git outa there!"

The girl's companion scrambled to his feet and lifted the young mother to his side. He supported her with his arms and aided her slowly to the doorway. She stood leaning against the door, the baby wrapped warmly and pressed against her breast.

The men lowered their rifles, stood silently behind their bright lights, shifted uneasily from one foot to the other. Then two men moved from the shadows into the light and reached up for the baby. The mother handed the child to them and sat down on the car floor. Her companion jumped to the cinders, lifted her down, and carried her across the road to the trees. She then took her baby and lay down on the dry grass under the yellow pines. The men returned to the car.

They moved along the north end of it flat against the sides and flashed their lights into the opposite end. The negro pressed against the car in the corner, breathing heavily. His long knife dangled loosely from his right hand.

"Ya better come out peaceable like, Jones!" the gold-star man yelled.

The negro remained hidden in the half-light.

The gold-badge man drew his long-barreled six-shooter and fired into the car wall. The bullet tore through the wood at the far end of the car behind the negro. Another man fired from the south end of the car. The bullet ripped through the wood, tore into the right arm of the negro above the elbow, and imbedded itself in the other side of the car. The negro dropped to the floor on his knees in the corner. Another bullet whined over his head. He tore his blue sleeveless shirt and tied a strip around his bleeding right arm.

The gold-badge man stood against the open doorway, leaned into the car and flashed the light into the corner. He steadied himself over the edge and leveled his revolver. Then the negro moved.

He leaped into the shadows out of the bright blinding light centered in the corner. Then toward the open doorway. The gold-badge man dropped to the cinders, the men on the road stepped back to the trees, and the negro touched the dusty road far from the car in the center of the brilliant flashlights and blinding spot-light from the touring car. He stumbled a step as he struck the road, but instantly righted himself and ran between the car and the woods toward the one dark opening.

Between the cars on the iron couplings, a man took careful aim with a rifle and fired. The negro dropped to his knees. Then he righted himself and continued running. In the touring car, two men fired. And then he stopped. For a moment he leaned forward on his toes and clutched his belly; the knife dropped from his hand and stuck in the clay road. Then he doubled over, pirouetted, and sprawled over the dusty road.

He lay where the last bullet had stopped him, one arm outstretched, the other on his belly, torn wide open. Blood streamed out of the corners of his mouth and over his grey and black striped trousers onto the road. The men extinguished their lights, and the white moonlight covered the negro as he lay between the pines on the yellow clay road.

The men shifted over the road, some to the touring car, others to the lifeless body. The gold-badge man walked over to the few men standing around the negro, watched him a moment, and then rolled him over on his face.

"All right. Pick up this black bastard and let's get outa here!"

The girl and her companion walked out of the shadows onto the road to the open boxcar. The thin man followed cautiously, watching the moving men. At the doorway he climbed into the car. The girl handed the baby to him. Then her companion jumped in. And two tall men laid down their rifles and lifted her up to him.

The Greek followed, climbed into the car, and went to the far end. The boy stood in the shadows staring at the negro and the strange white men. Up beyond the red flares, men motioned the engineer on, and the train moved slowly over the rails. When the open car passed him, the boy climbed in.

He watched the young mother in her companion's arms adjust herself to the swaying car and the Greek root about in the papers preparing his bed. The thin man walked about in the shadows for a while and then went over to the doorway and pulled the north door to the center, the south door within a few feet of it. He returned to his pack by the opposite wall and stretched out on the floor. "Ya better go to sleep, kid."

The boy still stood in the center of the car, in the shaft of moonlight that streaked across the floor. The train picked up speed over the straight stretch of rail and in a few minutes passed the state line. The cars swayed slightly and bumped each other as the train gained momentum. The boy walked to the doorway and stood staring into the white light and the dark pine forests for a long time. Then he sat down against the door-edge and dangled his right leg over the floor as he had seen the negro do. His light body trembled in the sharp night air; but he didn't seem to mind the cold and aloneness. His breathing became heavy and sobs choked his throat. He bit his nether lip and tried to stop the tears. Finally he turned his head against the door, covered his face with his hands, and cried, all alone in the coldness and moonlight and dark pine forests.

AURA LEE BARCLAY—
though deep the wave

panting down the halls
reading every door
whispering who am I

in an empty space
I stop to comb my hair
a tongue flares past
trumpets to the street
her hair is ink
her eyes are old
she is that william's woman
like the labeled doors
the words slide on
leave me with my golden hair
searching for my name
plowing a field I meet
plump birds who promise me
give us the bread you carry
and we will speak your name
I spread the bread upon the earth
I watch them bend to eat
a crimson flood
encircles them in fire
blasts away their feathers
leaves them silent
in their fatness

beyond the muddy miles
in a tangle by the road
I find the head
of my beloved dog
I hold him to my breast
I wash him with my tears
and all the while my nails
rip at the timbered doors
that hide myself
from me
lonely doors
labeled doors
ten thousand doors of death
swim past

then
rising through the waves
tumbling from the foam
green laurel leaves
flutter into song
I hear a name
but do not heed
for I am busy building
wreaths around the sun

LUCY KENT—Identity

Study the view
Of circumstance;
At the first clue
Take the impossible chance
And walk backward
Over breakable floors
Until you fall through.
Clutch at nothing
In widths of space;
Be prepared to die
A death peculiarly new,
And you will meet eye to eye,
Perpendicularly,
In this unfathomed place,
The inevitable you.

two poems by—INGEBORG KAYKO

One sorrow night I took her in,
pain with her bleak face.
Now the waif will no more leave,
what I have she takes

being long her overdue.
Years have made her eyes
so familiar I believe
nature made mine twice.

If she went the house would seem
empty not of friend
but the twin whereupon I,
unknowing why, depend.

Without her voice, inside nought,
like dwellers from the sea
inland turned deaf from listening,
speech would bypass me.

A shadow tried the door,
a step fell near.
Straightway my heart cancelled
one whole dead year,
saying: It is he,
come home as before,

to eat, and length the evening
with words, and thought.
The steps went on past.
My heart, untaught,
persuaded after them:
Stay, dear fraud!

JOHN T. WESTBROOK—*Bayou Idyl IV*

To me in childhood his talk was no more
Than falling rain, but I went back, as one
Goes back to rain. I knew him well enough
To be like fence-moss or like jasmine leaves
To his long reveries. And so for all
Our talk we were no more than droning rain
On listening leaves that coiled a slanted fence.
He was past eighty now. Through idle years
Of time with no event he had sat by
The old lone pine on yellow afternoons
And seemed to see enough from one worn chair
That showed him nothing but how needles dropped
And season changed with new wind whipping cotton.
This autumn night I had been gone a year.
He saw me come and sit, with no surprise
More than at leaves that go and come again.
He greeted me as one might greet the first
Dogwood of March, one who knows March and dogwoods.
"You know," he said, "at just a certain time
Past sunset, that house is not just a house—
It looks alive, like breathing, when the moon moves.
I never noticed that till yesterday."
I watched the moon, the meadow-end's dark murk
Where loomed the house nobody ever lived in,
Then wondered at the gravestone glistening
In the pine-latticed darkness, new and strange
Here where years were the same and upturned earth
A miracle, done out of cotton-time.
"We had to cut some of the roots," he said.
"I had to have it there, the spot he picked
When he set out the tree. It was in late
October as the first wild geese were passing.
Sumac and dogwood leaves were burning just
As now. The pine was little then. He took
It with a pewter spoon one early morning
As one might take a cabbage plant. I set

One too; it died. They always grew for him
Because they knew he loved them more than I did.
He said, "When we are old we'll sit here by
This pine sometimes in late October when
It is old too." Then like a schoolchild he
Lay down to hug the earth that was too big
To hug, and said he would be buried there.
That was the spot he chose before he started
His house and left to stay six months up North
Because the cotton failed that year. I heard
From him three times. He said that he had made
Money enough to build ten house with.
I don't know what he wanted with ten houses.
That was his pine; he never saw it, grown
Like this in the October moon. What if
The cotton failed? October was the same,
And I don't think God would have put a tag
On that full moon he missed the first year he
Was gone. All that was sixty years ago.
I still would not have missed it for ten houses.
The main thing about cotton is the way
The wind looks in the leaves. There must be wind
In leaves up North, or he would have come back
Before they brought him in a silken box.
I say the price is not the thing. What is
Cotton but something for the moon to rise through,
The rain to pat on, and the wind to tousle—
And then be sold when it has dried? Dead cotton!
That's what I sell. And if I get God's pay
In June, I don't care what the autumn price is.
The way it looks with dew in June—that's why
I raised it—that and rain and wind and moon.
Look at the spider web across the dogwoods—
The evening star looks half as if it might
Be caught—or more, as if they both had hair.
I never saw it just like that before.
There was a glowworm once in Spanish moss,
Almost like that—or foxfire—years ago."

two poems by—BYRON VAZAKAS

Museum of Abstractions

To the sense of guilt, familiarity
appalls. In this room I await
decision with the opening of a
door. My hands perspire. The

Sweat is myself forced out at last to
recognize another's pattern
by telescope of love,
the critic who steps back, and

With one eye focussing detail, appraises
in perspective the weak spot, the
line off-drawn, the color that is
suddenly stark and sickening.

Even the cold light of questioning is
nothing, is an isolated circle
when my first name is called. It
is a schoolboy's dilemma before a

Laughing class, a nightmare of nakedness.
The paradox of the personal, where
love's endearment becomes an epithet,
strips down the last defensive rags,

And I am no longer myself, but something
that has happened, a problem
abstract as these walls, an item
to be solved quite by itself.

Words on the Weather

Like a gaze dreaming into fire, or
the comfort of warm food, the
sound of feet sloshing through
snow rises to the high window

Where I wait. Below, in its evening
street, a child invents veined
valleys in the ice. Quickened
by cold, footsteps subscribe a

Rhythm of overshoes, a myth of woolen
coats; and evoke a dissonance of
minds, drunken or dead. The mind,
rushing where no feet can tread,

Planning, scheming, cursing, barbecues
its well-turned hate, or gull-like,
scavenges each morsel of delight.
The winter traffic's pattern

Parallels with heavy treads the whimsy
of bicycle tires. Across the way
the shop lights will go out; but
now a tardy clerk, stooping

Before a stiffer wind, coddles an
extravagant happiness. Let
someone help; let someone,
parting the evening fog, convince

The will that nothing lies beyond the
street lights' bland deceit but
what the eye desires; as I at
this lonely window watch—on

Winter walls where brick is black—the
logic of the melting snow announce
that death is merely moving from
a room but entering no other.

SCOTT GREER—*Night in the Deep Forest*

For John Gould Fletcher

Firs yawn in thunder, and storm winds wet with pine
force the doors of the cabin, and out of the animal night
sweep wild pungent voices, tearing the roots of our heart
with the terrible salt of sea-change, the urges beyond all time.

Over the dark Ozarks the driven clouds of storm
torn wide by the lightning fangs, swept by rains of fire
shape for one there, on the ranges of the night
a dark remembered loveliness—
O yet the flowering flame
only returns the bleakness of the unkonwn cliffs of dark,
and the echoing immensity of the terror in our heart.

And the last dim threads of our history is broken,
torn on harsh boulders, and dissolved in a gust of time;
the terrible winds have come again, and cold the storm has spoken
out of the yawning wilderness that take the splitting mind.

For the white world of republics is lost behind the ranges,
the simple columns far behind the fallen bridges: broken,
But here, under thunder swaying, and cradled by great pine
a dark world is retaking with lianas of green flame
the long forgotten stockades, the lost trails to life.

And we who came later, we who have known
no memory of home upon this land
but only the hidden resting place, adrift on the forest floor—
who have known in the end
only the mould our body covers
to abandon with the dawn, to leave forevermore—
We who were born stark naked to the nightsounds
are loosed and lost forever in this sea between two shores.

But his heart would not be stilled to this,
this sea of stone in darkness
ripped through by storm flame and the empty tongues of wind;
his voice calls on before us
into the ageless forest,
fleeing this unloved body, this wilderness of men.

Away from the darkening city, whose red night skies
were conceived out of hunger, torn from the womb of pain,
he moves on forever, down the great cliffs of darkness,
speaking again to the forest and the stone harps of silence
where all our writhen words are driven foam before the rains—

He cries out of pain, to his own angel watching
down the dark drift of descending years,
the music and the flame.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER—
On A Day For Greatness

(August 11-12, Seattle to San Francisco)

What were they talking about on the eve of V-J Day?
What were they truly saying as they waited for that day?
The black war-cloud was suddenly lifted, started drifting away;

The sun came forth in glory, just before the victory-day.
Seattle at afternoon passing. The sleepy hazy valleys
Filled with orchards, bracken, madrona, going down to the blue-gray sea;
As the train thundered southward fast, past shipping yards and sawmills;
Logs rafted down in the water—and words heard, unsteadily:

"When this God-damned war gets over, I'm going to build me a real home. But I'm not going to get anything arranged on those old-fashioned God-damned Victorian principles. The architects are all just plain nuts—I want everything fixed up on one floor. No God-dамed stairs to climb. The refrigerator will be one of those Westinghouse jobs. I cleaned upon a lot of money by buying a formula for liquid furniture polish from a fellow without a God-damned red cent, and marketing it under the name of Furniture Cosmetic. The public fell for it, and kept on paying for the God-damned crap."

"I've been working for Business Associates. We show the people who can't do it, just how to run their business. We charge them ten dollars an hour; because if we didn't, they wouldn't want to listen to us. We seldom take a job that doesn't last for two or three weeks, worth fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred dollars. I meet all sorts, and each is an individual problem. I've seen a lot of this country, but all this traveling is the worst part of my job. Most of these boys in uniform haven't any notion what they want to do when the war is over; they will just drift into a job and stay there, round pegs in square holes. All through life. It's good working at a job you really want to work at, like myself."

What were they really hoping for on this day before V-J Day?
What were their visions and dreams ere they came to that might day
That they had worked so long to shape—what in their long array,
Could be for them abiding joy and reason of that day?

Night. Waterfront at Portland. Neon-lights piercing the darkness.
White cone of Mount Hood blacked out to south; tagged sailors moving forward,
To broaden the troop-sleeper in the rear. Broadcast rumors of peace, thick as flies in the air.
A yellow young moon, hung surprisingly in a hot, still, August sky.

"I only got to the Naval Base at Klamath Falls two months ago; after tackling Guadalcanal, Leyte, Lingayen, North Africa, and the Philippines invasion. Now I've already gained twenty pounds. Was down to a skeleton with malaria. I won't be out of the Navy till 1947, since I signed up for that long. But the last two months—boy, but this is the life!"

"I'm one of the lucky ones. Back from the Pacific on leave just a few days ago. Without a scratch—and got a job to go back to, in the Los Angeles district, as soon as the Navy will let me go. I'm lucky, too, in another way; they put me ashore in Seattle, and my wife happened to be up there, having a vacation with her relatives. Now she can come down here with me—and she really is a sweet girl. But I'm under orders to pull out, going back to a shipping-out base tomorrow. I'll be mighty glad when all this is over."

What were they praying for on the eve of V-J Day?
What were their worshipful thoughts on the Sunday before that day,
As the train roared downhill southward, without a stop or stay?
What were their strivings to God at noon of that cloudless day?

The twin-tipped brown cone of Mount Shasta, streaked with eternal snow-fields;
Above the denuded forest; great lava-fields, black down-flowing
Into the far-off yellow desert. Huge pine-trunks broken, shattered,
Above the steep, rescending slopes; the vastness of the void.
An eagle's outspread wings aloft; a trainload of passengers going
Around curve after fading curve, shifting from daylight to darkness.

"We were told where our targets were, which the artillery had already spotted for us. When we flew over them, we just couldn't see any Japs—nothing but trees and jungles. I've never seen but two or three Japs in all this war. This flying is a crazy game—Major Bong, who was killed only the other day, must have asked for it; he probably like flying lots better than I."

"They have to deal with the Japanese Emperor, and leave him on his throne. He is the religious head of the people: he can govern, if he wants to, without Parliament. If they try to make an end of him, there isn't anyone who will sign up for peace—the whole country will go into guerilla war. As for you civilians, I don't think you really understand. It might have been better if you had had some fighting among yourselves, or seen some bombs fall—just so you got a taste of this war, instead of grumbling so much about it."

What were they now achieving on the day before V-J Day?
What were their deeds and doings as they passed to the on-coming day,
Rolling like a cloud from westward, to sweep the dead past away,
And make new faith and charity? What were the works of that day?

The valley of the Sacramento—flat, straw-colored fields against a wall of dull-green;
Live-oaks and orchards stretching out; a high row of palms before an old ranch-house,
Crowned with stiff fronds by the Gods of the Pacific; dry heat through the air outspread.
The sun descending through brown haze, in windless dusky silence.

"All that rumor about peace was just the bunk. But peace has got to come soon. Maybe they are just waiting, afraid to spring it on us. As for me, I mean to cut loose just as soon as I can: no, I don't mind mobs going for a riot; that's all right by me. I don't know what I'll do when I get out. Time

to think about that when it comes—and I'm damned if I care. All I want is just to get back to normal, and kick around like I used to—get a few drinks under my belt, and a girl who doesn't care too much, and go around as I did, before this business got started."

Such were their sayings and thoughts on the eve of V-J Day:
Such were their meanings and dreams before the dawn of that day
Which soared over ages of effort; which showed the final way
Which man must tread or utterly fall; such was the drift of that day.

HUBERT CREEKMORE—Formula No. 20

The first words
like a light on a far shore
worming across an obsidian lake
the first words you said
I remember. And your eyes
(waters narrowing, perhaps
shores drawn close)
reality. Consciousness is now
And all these months,
hands outstretched
to the far shore
with wishes twining
like greedy vines . . . . .
Now what has become of the light
and the broad scar it made
in the night of the lake?
And my hands . . . ?

GLENNA HALLAND CHRISTOPHERSON—
A Scene From "If I Can Have the Summer"

FOREWORD: IRENE is a slender, long-legged fourteen year old who has never been to school. She is the only child of Chet and Margaret Turner who came to Wyoming fifteen years ago because Chet was interested in the insect and fossil life of the vicinity. "BUGS" (Ignatius T. Foley) is a celebrated entomologist, former pupil and friend of Irene's father who has not seen him in 15 years. "Bugs" has come from Harvard for the summer to conduct an experiment. He asks his arrival be kept secret. Irene's mother resents him and has begun to surround him with suspicion. Unknown to Irene and her father, she has summoned the police. "Bugs" is in his early thirties, sensitive, has intelligent, handsome bearing.

At Rise: Irene and Bugs have become good friends. It is now August. It has been a typical blazing, hot Wyoming day. Bugs and Irene are alone on the top of a knoll in the fossil fields with a cliff directly behind them. They are about a mile above the Turner cabin. In the heat of the day they have kept well to the coulees and draws, but now that it is sundown they have ventured to the top of the knoll to work.

The rocks are still hot from the heat of the day and Irene has spread her funny magazines down and is sitting on that. She wears white shirt, sleeves rolled above elbows, and half-way open down her chest. She wears blue jeans like she wore in the last Act. Her cow-boy hat lies near-by.

Bugs has shirt off. It can be seen lying on a rock. He's down on hands and knees with a file and hammer, chipping fossils of former insect life. He, too, wears blue jeans; they are rolled to the knees. He wears a sun visor. His files etc. are nearby, also a lunch basket and Irene's tools and files.

Irene: Golly it's been hot today! The rocks are still too warm to sit on. (Rubs sweaty hair from forehead. Bugs is busy and does not reply.) I can see the last of the sun—look, way over there along the rimrock wall there's a little bunch of cattle just standing there bathed in pure light. It makes them mahogany-color. From here it looks like they're all standing looking into the sun. I wonder what they're thinking? (Still no reply from Bugs. Presently Irene raises her voice):

I can see the roof of our ranch house, too. It looks like a big tin can, the kind peaches come in. Bugs, don't you want to see the sun go down? Don't you think it's miraculous to see the hills covered in shadow with just their edges turned into the sun?

(Bugs looks up and smiles. Removes sun visor, then turns and immediately back to his work.)

Bugs: Just for tonight I'll sacrifice it! If I hurry I wouldn't be at all surprised if I couldn't dig out something here before it gets too dark. You describe

it to me—go on, tell me while I keep my eyes on this chisel. (She is silent.) Your eyes are more beautiful than mine. If I'd looked at the cattle I'd only said the sun heightens their color. You said they are mahogany and stand on the edge of light. That shows how much more valuable your eyes are than mine!

Irene: Do you know what Tubby or Joe would have said if I'd interrupted their work—just like I've done to you?

Bugs (busy, only mumbles): No, what?
Irene: Pest! They'd said *Pest!*

Bugs (chuckles audibly): Both of them?

Irene: Both of them. They're just alike even if Joe is ten years older. No matter how old they grow they'll be just the same. When I was little they called me pest and now I've grown up they still call me pest.

Bugs: They don't mean it.

Irene: I know they don't. I still like to fight and wrestle with them. It's fun. I don't know why it is, but it is. What makes me disgusted is that I keep on growing and they stand still.

Bugs: Really?

Irene: Yes. Some people stand still, some even grow *backward*. Mother's one. She grows backwards.

Bugs: Are you sure about that?

Irene: Of course! Daddy says when Mother first came out here she had spirit and looks and a good head on her shoulders.

Bugs: I can believe that.

Irene: You know the reason she came was because she was engaged to daddy and he'd been out here two whole summers hunting insects. One day she said to herself, if I'm going to die I'll go out in Wyoming and die—but at least I'll get to see the country that he loves more than he does me. Those were her exact words.

Bugs (mumbles): Long time to remember exact words.

Irene: She told me herself—lots of times. She came out and they were married and then she took her money—she used to have quite a lot—and bought a ranch and cattle. The ranch she bought is the one we live on now.

Bugs: That sounds smart to me.

Irene: Of a sort, I suppose. But then she put her clothes away and let her hair go ragged and started hunting sage medicine, and said she was through with the civilized world—that it was all nonsense. You can't just cut yourself off from the world like that. You're not *thinking* when you do that, are you?

Bugs (looks up suddenly and fixes his eyes on her face . . . speaks loudly): I don't know!

Irene: Why do you look at me so funny?

Bugs (begins to work again): Was I?

Irene: Do you have a grudge against the civilized world, too?
(Shakes his head.)
Then tell me what you think of it. You've been out in the world and I'm going there someday. Tell me what it's like.

Bugs: Remember what you said about the mahogany cows? Well, it's like that. Your eyes, if they're kept here long enough—and I can see your mother intends they shall—may cause you to always see like that. You'll probably view a marvelous world when you go out into it, filled with things like mahogany cows. *I* don't know.

Irene: How do you see? Tell me how you see.

Bugs: Like I see the cows—not mahogany at all. I struggle with things and fight them and ask questions of them. Often, time and people and even the college—seems like a prison.

Irene: Time and people seem like a prison. That sounds funny.

Bugs: Does it?

Irene: It does to my ears.

Bugs: Prison is a place that kills everything you had when you went in and substitutes nothing you can take out with you. I have a great fear of prisons, you know. Once when I was a little boy I went there with a chum of mine to visit his father who was an inmate. I'll never forget it. I always said I'd rather kill myself than go to prison.

Irene: But people deserve to go there if they do something terrible.

Bugs: Sometimes.

Irene: Not always? Don't you think they always should?

Bugs: Not always. I can think of one time they shouldn't.

Irene: Tell me.

Bugs: Oh, take a crime of passion. That's one time.

Irene: What's a crime of passion?

Bugs: When you're temporarily off balance. When you're so angry or grieved or jealous that you don't know for a minute what you're doing. Suppose you got so angry you struck a person and killed him? Then the next minute you saw what you had done. Lots of people in the world have done that.

Irene: Then you should die. You took his life and you ought to give your own up gladly.

Bugs: I'm inclined to agree with you. But you took his quickly and without thought. Your own should be forfeited in the same manner. You shouldn't have to go to prison and wait and wait until they decide what to do with you—and then wait around until execution day, counting the hours and, finally, the minutes. That's cruel. That's punishing you in a way you have no right to be punished.

Irene (suddenly): I'm going home and let my slate bugs out of that tin box I have them in!

Bugs: What?

Irene: Don't you see! It wasn't their fault they happened to be crawling across my path the day I came along.

Bugs: Really now! I didn't mean that.

Irene: It's all very clear to me after what you've said. I took them and that's that. You can't undo crimes, I guess. But I'll kill them quickly and painlessly. I'll dip them in alcohol. They have to be dead anyhow for the experiment. I can't see what difference it would make how freshly dead they are.

Bugs (laughs): Let's chuck these gloomy thoughts in favor of the skeleton of this prehistoric insect I'm digging! What kind of a world do you think he crawled in?

Irene (speculating): Oh, one filled with great snakes and huge animals and no man at all.

Bugs: Right! Has the sun gone completely yet?

Irene (peering): Yes, funny how fast darkness closes in, once the sun is gone in the hills. The cows are almost lost. I can hardly see them any more. Of course, I'm near-sighted. Daddy says I should have glasses when I start college, glasses like he has.

Bugs: I'm glad I came out here to see mahogany cows through your eyes. They're the first ones I've ever seen.

Irene: I mustn't talk to you any more. Remember, you said for me to be quiet so you could finish.

Bugs: That's right I did. I'm going to make a grand entry in my notebook when this is finished. I'm going to call it the best thing I've ever accomplished.

Irene: Are you really?

Bugs: Yes. And for a joke underneath it I'm going to say, this piece of work wipes my slate clean, World. This piece of work balances my record for all time.

Irene: You mean this is more important than anything you've done?

Bugs: You might look at it that way. Today I've found a link. When you find a link that will connect many things for many people in their studies, I think you've done something, don't you?

Irene: Yes. Funny how it must have been here all these years, and then it takes the right person to see it. Daddy and I have been over this place lots of times. Wouldn't mother be mad if she thought you were smarter than daddy?

Bugs: I don't think it's a question of smarter—I don't look at it that way.

Irene: You know, I don't think mother likes you very well.

Bugs: Really?

Irene: Yes, I hear things, you know. She always thinks daddy is taking me away from her, and now she thinks you're doing it.

Bugs (is silent for a moment and then speaks softly): In a few more weeks I'll be gone away.

Irene: Mother thinks you're just saying that. She's afraid you'll be like daddy was—you'll like it so well you'll just stay here.

Bugs: I'm going, have no fear of that.

Irene: I don't want you to go—ever!

Bugs: That's very nice of you.

Irene: Don't you think maybe you'll change your mind and stay, when you know I want you to so bad?

Bugs: I won't change my mind. Let's be quiet for just a little while. I'm nearly finished with this.

(A long silence ensues. Irene watches Bugs intently for awhile. Then she gets up and walks slowly toward him. She stops and studies him. He does not see her. She turns abruptly and hurries to her bag where she has her file and instruments. Digs deeply into it and comes up with the dress Tubby has given her. She shakes the wrinkles out of it. Goes off by herself a little way and take off her white blouse. She wiggles the dress over her head and pulls it down to her knees. Then she reaches up under and unfastens the blue jeans. They slide to the ground. She steps out of them and reaches up and smooths her hair, decides braids is not the thing, so shakes it out fluffy, throwing her ribbons down with the jeans. She comes back and looks at Bugs. He's still engrossed in his work. She approaches him slowly. She reaches down and plucks his arm.)

Irene: Look!

Bugs (whispering): Good lord!

Irene: It's me!

Bugs: Yes—I see.

Irene: I've never worn this before. Tubby bought it for me as a present and mother didn't like it. I didn't like it at first either, then I got to thinking—after you came.

Bugs (quickly): What did you get to thinking?

Irene: Well, that maybe—maybe you think I'm a child just like everyone else does and I want to show you that I am not.

Bugs: Of course, you're not.

Irene: Don't I look well in a dress? Don't I look older?

(He is silent, staring at her. Finally she speaks hysterically): Well, don't I? Don't I?

Bugs (gently): You do. Of course, you do. You look beautiful.

Irene (in a more level tone): I've been carrying it around in my napsack. I was afraid if mother came across it again she might burn it. Mother burns or steps on whatever comes in her way. She won't even let daddy run the cattle.

Bugs (quickly rolling over on his back and laying hands across his eyes as if tired) : Lots of people do that to others if they think they are wiser than the others.

Irene: Well, mother isn't wiser than the others. She isn't! I swear she isn't! How does it happen she thinks she's wiser than even the schoolteachers and so she won't send me out to school? She isn't wise—she's just growing backwards!

(Bugs is silent. Irene kneels down and looks at him). Take your hands away from your eyes and look up. Do you like my hair long and fluffy like this instead of in braids? Feel how fluffy it is. Feel!

(Bugs reaches forth and feels her hair, lingeringly : Do you like it?

Bugs (softly) : Very much.

Irene: And you do like the dress, don't you?

Bugs: Yes, that too.

Irene: (She touches her breasts lightly with her hands.) Don't you think it makes me look—more like a woman, somehow?

Bugs: Yes.

Irene: They don't show up at all in an old shirt, do they?

Bugs: Not as much.

Irene: If I just didn't have such brown arms and face I'd maybe look quite nice, wouldn't I? You can see as far as my shirt comes—there's a sun-colored line. My skin is really very white underneath my clothes.

Bugs: I'm sure it is.

Irene: You're giving such funny answers! (She turns and looks out across the hills.) Don't you like talking to me? I always felt you did until now. All summer when we've been working and it's come time to stop and rest and talk I always feel quick-breathed. It's something like the feeling I have when Daddy and mother say suddenly that we're going to the city and I can go with them. An excited feeling.

(She turns and looks at him.) Bugs, don't you ever have it, too?

Bugs: Of course! (He rolls over quickly and gropes for the chisel and hammer. Speaks roughly to her.) Go away. I'm about done!

Irene: You are done.

Bugs: No, not quite.

(Irene lies down on her stomach and wiggles up beside him so she can see, too.)

Irene: You are so, except for your notes. Let me write them for you. Then some of my handwriting will be in your notebook and you won't ever forget me.

Bugs: No—go away. I have to print it.

Irene: You can print it at home, then. It's getting too dark anyhow. (She reaches up suddenly and ruffles his hair with her hand.)

Bugs (grasping her hand down tightly) : You heard me, I said go away!

Irene: You're *actually* talking to *me?*

Bugs: To you!

Irene (suddenly and hysterically): All right! No one needs ever to say that to me twice. I'll go away, all right, and you'll never see me again!
(She turns quickly and starts across the top of the hill.)

Bugs: Where are you going?

Irene: Not home, I can tell you! I'm going away—away in the hills and no one will ever find me. I'll lose myself in the darkness.

Bugs: Come back here!
(He starts after her, catches her arm. She tries to shake herself free. He will not lose her. She begins to bite and kick. A struggle ensues in which Bugs comes out the victor. He picks her up bodily, and her struggles die. She begins to cry softly.)
Irene! Irene!
(He carries her back to the top of the knoll, her head pressed to his breast, her long hair dropping over his arm. His face can be seen filled with horror and indecision. He looks about as if for a place to lay her. He decides against it, and gently he stands her on her feet. He reaches for his shirt and with it dries her eyes.)
You're a woman all right! Good lord, I wonder how early it begins! Don't cry any more.

Irene (sobbing): I—I—

Bugs (passionately and loudly, as if to raise himself above her sobs): Like you, she was a woman too, I see that now. Why couldn't I have seen?

Irene: I won't go home. I tell you I won't! I don't want to see you or anybody ever again!

Bugs: What can I do? Nothing! Nothing is the answer. Stop crying, please. Please stop.

Irene: I—I c-can't . . .

Bugs: And me—I can't go back. There's nothing to go back to. She wouldn't understand why I did it. I've broken whatever communication we had. There's nothing for me now—nothing!

Irene (halting her tears and looking up at him): Are—are you going to cry, too?

Bugs (roughly): No, I'm not going to cry! I've got something to tell you. Will you let me tell you something?

Irene: Is it about daddy and mother? I don't want to hear!

Bugs: No, it's not about them.

Irene: Is it about me?

Bugs: No—it's about someone you've never heard of.

Irene (wiping her eyes with his shirt): What is it?

Bugs: It doesn't matter about anybody else—whether they will ever understand or not. But I want you to understand.

Irene: I don't know what you mean.

Bugs: Without glasses you can't see as far as I can, but I can still see the roof of your ranch house that you said looks like a big can that peaches come in. I can see something else, too. Your daddy has all the bars down on the corral fence. That means something to him and to me. It's a signal.

Irene: A signal? Have you and daddy got signals worked up to say things to each other?

Bugs: Yes. This one is to tell me that we have company. I see a big black car drawn up to the door. It's not Molly's little rattle-trap of an engine. It's more important company than that. They'll probably be staying for supper so we must hurry.

Irene: Mother won't like waiting supper on us. It always makes her mad, especially if there's company. She'll want me to help. Of course, with company she won't get around to it as soon.

Bugs: Will I have time to tell you something, do you think?

Irene: Yes. Oh, yes.

Bugs: You sit here, then. I'll sit here. (He sits about a foot from her. He drops his head on his knees.) I don't know where to begin. It's always hard for me to start a story. With *facts,* it's different. I'm really very adept at facts, you know.

Irene: Like your work, you mean?

Bugs: Yes, that's what I mean. But with a story—well, I'm never sure. Do you suppose people can reach in and stop a story and say, Here's the Beginning?

Irene: I don't know.

Bugs: Once I had a sister. She married. Eventually she died of a broken heart.

Irene: People don't die of broken hearts!

Bugs: They do of drink, don't they? It can be the same thing.

Irene: I suppose so.

Bugs: When she died, she left a little girl. I raised her—one lousy housekeeper and I. We raised her. We—we did like your mother, only we were more blind and more stupid. We failed her miserably.

Irene (bitterly): I might have known you had been a sort of father to someone at sometime!

Bugs (bewildered): How do you arrive at that?

Irene: The way you spoke to me that day you first came . . . when I was talking about my insects and how I built houses for them. I was being very much of a little girl then, and you didn't laugh like any other man would have. (Resentfully): You were *kind*—like you understood all about little girls!

Bugs: That's unfair. I had no such thought.

Irene: It's no use fibbing to me. I know. Tell me, then, was this little girl like me?

Bugs: Please don't say it that way. Yes, she was like you. She was very like you—she ran and jumped and teased people. Only she was so frail we had to feed her chocolate pudding with cream on it every day.

Irene: What was her name?

Bugs: Celia. One summer when she was ten years old I left her with this housekeeper, and I went alone on a fishing trip to northern Minnesota. You've never been to Minnesota, have you?

Irene: I've never been out of Wyoming. You know I haven't!

Bugs: It's a rolling country filled with lakes and pointed trees. I got a cabin on a lake and rented a boat. It was in May—too early for much except northern pike, and they weren t biting very well. One evening when I rowed my boat in, I found the local school board on the docks waiting for me.

Irene: What for?

Bugs: They wanted me to give a speech at their high school's commencement exercises. The speakers they'd planned on couldn't come. Then they heard of me. Funny how I never escape, even on a fishing trip.

Irene: Did you go?

Bugs: Yes. It was a strange little school house. I wish you could have seen it. The graduates sat on a kind of platform, and all around the platform were moccassin flowers sitting in blue pots. Moccassin is their state flower, you know. There was one coppery-haired boy. He was the valedictorian.

Irene (interrupting): What's that?

Bugs: He was the student with the highest scholarship. He's the one I want to tell you about. He was tall and his hair curled all over his head tightly, like a girl's. He hated it and tried to make it straight with vaseline. (Bugs smiles crookedly.)

Irene: You sound as if you like him. Did you like him right-off?

Bugs: Yes. I don't think I've ever like any boy so well. He reminded me of when I was a boy, coming green and penniless from the country, I asked him to come to college. At first he said he couldn't. The only money he had was a small scholarship allowed him by the school. But he came on that and worked hard and I helped him.

Irene: Did he stay long?

Bugs: He was with us three years. Celia was very fond of him. She had grown to be a big, strong girl by then. She followed him everywhere—when he went swimming and when he went to play tennis. He didn't think she was a nuisance like most older boys would have. She loved to wrestle and fight with him. They were at it most of the time.

Irene (suspiciously): Like I wrestle with Tubby and Joe?

Bugs: Yes. Our old house that had once been so quiet often sounded like a circus had been let loose right in the middle of it. That went on for three years. His last year I had him help me in the office. I wanted him to know everything I knew. Then, one day, he turned on me.

Irene: What do you mean—turned on you?

Bugs: It was like this—one day I worked later than usual. He went home early. I didn't get home 'till after supper time. (Bugs' voice has now grown quicker): When I walked in he and Celia were down on the floor in front of the fireplace. They were bright in the firelight. And they weren't wrestling any more! I was—I was so angry I couldn't see—that's a very grave fault, being so angry you can't see. I ran over and I jerked him up. I held him and I hit him. I hit him as hard as I could.

(Irene has reached over suddenly and grasped his hand. Holds it tightly.) Then I picked up my cane and my brief case and I went back to the college. I picked up my files, and then I took a train for out here. I was blind and I was a fool. I've failed them both—I'd as soon be dead. I'm not wise enough to see tomorrow through. I can't.
(Irene lets go of his hand.)

Irene: Did you hurt him?

Bugs: I didn't think so. I didn't intend to. But now I'm sure—(He gets up quickly, begins to gather his file and instruments, puts on shirt.) Here, Irene, pick up your things. We must hurry. It's getting so dark you won't be able to see the trail.

Irene (getting up): I've got to get this dress off and put my shirt and jeans back on. Mother wouldn't like it if I came home in this dress.
(She begins to disrobe. Bugs is packing brief case. She says suspiciously): Bugs, why did you tell me that story?

Bugs: I don't know for sure. You tell me, do you think the gods laugh when we destroy somebody for something we are capable of ourselves?

Irene: This is a crazy conversation and I haven't any answer. You tell me why you told me the story.

Bugs: Maybe—I don't know for sure. On the spur of the moment I might voice a very good one though.

Irene: What?

Bugs: Maybe it's so you'll understand that women have obligations, too—even if they're only little girls. Come on, now, hurry.

Irene: I am. Do you think I should bother to put my hair back in braids?

Bugs: I don't think it's essential. Your mother won't mind that surely.

Irene: No, I guess she won't. She'll only say I don't look neat.

Bugs: I'm dog-tired. It's like I've run a long way and can't run any further.

Irene: I have that feeling sometimes, too, especially after daddy and I have been out riding for cattle. You do look tired, or something. You look funny. Don't you feel well?

Bugs: Maybe working in the hot sun for so long. Just tired, that's all.

Irene: Let me help you down. You can lean on my shoulder.

Bugs: That's not necessary. There's something you can do, though.

Irene: What?

Bugs: How about carrying my files and instruments for me tonight?

Irene: Sure.

Bugs: Could you carry them safely home—the files, especially? They've got my work in them. The tools aren't so important.

Irene: You sound as if you aren't going with me!

Bugs: I am. Of course I am. I bet you're not strong enough to carry these things!

Irene: I bet I am!

Bugs: Here then. (Gives her the things.)

Irene: I guess you'll have to take the basket with the lunch things in it—it's so bulky.

Bugs: Here, give it to me.

Irene: My files and dress are in the basket, too, so don't lose it.

Bugs: It was such a nice lunch, wasn't it? Except you buttered the sandwiches only in the middle and forgot the crusts. And you sat and read your funny book to me all the time (laughs). I'll enjoy carrying the memory of our lunch with me.

Irene: It's getting pretty dark. Maybe you'd better walk ahead of me, to lead the way. It'll get awfully dark when we get down in the grease wood.

Bugs: No, you'll make it all right. Near-sighted people can see best on difficult trails. Just be careful and keep your eyes on the trail in front of you every minute. (They start slowly down the trail.) I see a light in your house already. Do you suppose your mother will have hot biscuits for supper?

Irene: I bet she will—being as there is company. And she'll have currant jam. She'll be sure to have currant jam.

Bugs: You must be sure to eat, Irene.

(Suddenly Irene hears a rattle of stones, as if someone behind her has tripped or fallen over the cliff. She stops short and turns. She cannot see Bugs. He has disappeared into the darkness.)

Irene: Bugs where are you!

(This last speech in a shriek of fear. She is dumb, afraid to go and afraid to stay, afraid to call out again for him. Her voice is still an echo in the rocks. She turns back in the trail. For a brief moment she stands clutching the files and the instruments. Then she runs wildly down the trail toward home, clutching them tightly.)

GLEN A. HARRIS—*The Unredeemed*

You are the soldiers;
We, you say, the sleeping dead
Lulled in the mounded peace of earth,
All accounts quite squared, balanced,
Cancelled from the books of life,
Debt and debtor one.

We girded for bright accolades of fame
And won a grim gratuity of teeming crosses,
Soaring monuments in city squares.
And now we sleep, you say, in peace
Deep in our sharded cenotaph of mold,—
Aye! clipt fast, trenched, ribbed, sealed,
Flinted down, bastioned by the reeling centuries! . . .
The dead know well
How lips and love and lust
Are regimented with the dust.
We have forgotten, we have quite forgotten
The wandering touch of wind upon our cheeks;
The surge of color down old summer glades;
Red sunsets scumbled on the palette of the night;
Light-shaken waters flooding to the sun
And Amphitrite cruising in her silver shell.
Forgotten the bite of frost; the storied blaze
Of winter fires; the long sea-searching of the tides
For truth, the master-pearl, ledged beneath
The deep abysm of things.
And love—
Poor love!—
Shriven with the brimming chrism of sorrow.

All these we had, all these are gone,
Gone like sun-motes with the nascent dark,
Gone like phantom sigils on the broken
Urns of song . . .
Do we lie here forgotten,
Listening to the cool and healing rain
Pour for milleniums?
O Unknown Soldier—enough! Come down!
Though you may sentinel a thousand years
Grey with the dust of heedless passing feet,
Blind to the sun, with eyelids ridged

Against the rain—
Your witness is in vain.
Once more the legions tread,
The guns awake,
Men stare along the steel to death
And iron heels drum on our fallen mouths.

Thermopylae! . . . Austerlitz! . . . Mons! . . .
And myriad other sounding names through whose
Enormous pulse runs swiftly the underdrum
Of blood and violence . . .

Bitter the shame, and bitter the fee! O Christ,
You who tune the golden wires of song
In churches shrill with the scrannel voice of creed,
Is this the peace that passeth knowledge
To kiss again the cruel rood, play out again
Our blood-diced lottery with Death
Against some quickening dunelight in the soul?
O living comrades marching in the sun,
You are the soldiers.
Are we but the sleeping dead,
Lost pilgrims on the unreturning way?
For us it matters not.
Wind fast the shroud, seal fast the troubled lips.
Let lob-worms feast and tunnel in the clay.
Hope, like a star-shell, roams the night
And sinks back toward the dark.
Yet see! Bethesda lies in trance.
Strange wings are passing over!

HAROLD NORSE—*Tradition*

The solid museum is a vase
with paper flowers
and wax stems which are the past.
I walk in tessellated halls
of light floating through crisscross shafts
trying to read as a book
the pages of the world's acts,
losing my place and walking back
through corridors of fact.
To pick the ancient buds
of these dead branches is my will,
and on the hot black soil
where blows the south and present wind
to walk without chaos,
holding into Spring
acanthous memory for living
birds to sing.

D. H. PIPER—The Lost Decade

The Crack-Up. By F. Scott Fitzgerald. Collected and Edited by Edmund Wilson, New York: New Directions. 1945. 345 pp. $3.50.

Tucked away among the cartoons and haberdashery advertisements of the December, 1939, *Esquire* is a short, fragmentary sketch of Scott Fitzgerald's called "The Lost Decade." Published twelve months before his sudden death, it tells of a "pale, tall man of forty, with blond, statuesque hair" who is seeing New York for the first time after a ten-year-long drunk. It is a good piece of writing, done in that sure, cool, smooth prose which came so easily to Fitzgerald, and its title, "The Lost Decade" would serve appropriately for this volume of uncollected material which Edmund Wilson, his long-time friend, has edited for New Directions. A major purpose for the project, as Mr. Wilson sets down in the introduction, is "to put on record his (F.'s) state of mind and his point of view during the later years of his life." In its emptiness, bitter humor, and chiefly in its preoccupation with personal tragedy, the brief *Esquire* sketch summarizes pointedly the attitude with which Fitzgerald faced the years from 1929-1939.

Within certain limits, Fitzgerald's life can be conveniently divided into a succession of memorable decades. There is something naively heroic in this symbolism which would have pleased his romantic, Irish vanity. The years from 1909-1919 were the formative ones of a mid-western country day school, eastern prep school, Princeton, Officer's Training Camp and a final three months after the war's end in a New York advertising office. He never really outgrew those early years. 1919-1920 was a fabulous decade, not only for himself but for the society of which he wrote so well. Those years include practically all of his finest efforts, from the best-selling triumph of "This Side of Paradise," which ushered in 1920 and the Jazz Age, through "The Great Gatsby" of 1925, and the unforgetable stories like "May Day" and "The Rich Boy." The early and best parts of "Tender Is the Night" had been drafted by 1929, even though five more years were to elapse before the novel's publication. But by 1929 the great years were over, for himself as well as for many others of his generation. The winter of the stock market crash found Fitzgerald and his wife on the verge of their own private breakdowns, with a year's subsequent convalescence destined to follow among the sanatoriums of Switzerland. The emotional "crack-up" which hit Fitzgerald a few years later came not as a result of the Depression, but was brought on by the same causes. In paralleling the collapse of his external world, Fitzgerald once again testified to his close identification with it.

The years from 1929-1939 were his least productive and most unhappy, and even the best writing, most of which Mr. Wilson has carefully collected here, rarely approaches the level of "Tender Is the Night" or "The Great Gatsby." By 1940, and the beginning of another decade in his career, he had quietly begun the painstaking work on "The Last Tycoon" which proved beyond any doubt that Fitzgerald had not been drunk all through the Nineteen Thirties (although rumors drifting out of Hollywood had frequently hinted to the contrary). Writing in the last months of his life with a skill still unsurpassed by his growing host of imitators, he sought to describe the strange life that goes on in the windowless caverns of the motion picture lots. Hovering always in the background is a merciless satire on the cheap world of Hollywood

cafe society, thinly veneered with a brittle layer of sunkist Southern California movie wealth. But more memorable than the shadowy characters of his half-completed novel is the prevading, poignant mood of "so little time" (to recall an echoing phrase from "The Last Tycoon"). As always, he was writing of himself and his generation, in both of whom he sensed the premonition of an undefinable, inevitable urge toward some unknown but fateful crisis, which characterized so memorably the atmosphere of the closing years of the 1930's.

"The Crack-Up," the title piece in the present volume, is the first of a series of three articles which Fitzgerald published in *Esquire* in the Spring of 1936. Together they constitute a probing self-confession of what he thought had caused his mental and emotional collapse during the preceeding half-dozen years. As a record of that belief, they are tragic and moving. But the real tragedy of his career, for this writer, is not to be explained away by his diagnosis, but rather by the tragedy of the age in which he lived. No artist in Fitzgerald's generation identified his own personal life more closely with the world of his imagination, and yet failed to understand himself as a rational, thinking person more completely. His follies and weaknesses, like his many virtues, were those of his generation, and it was this identification with the dead decade of the 1920's (and not his identification with his own characters, as he himself came to believe during the 1930's) which later for a time dried up the source of his energy and inspiration.

Fitzgerald once spoke of his major characters as his brothers. The broken, disappointed creature of these essays, whose misfortunes are rationalized and carefully explained to his own satisfaction, is as fictionalized a personage as Jay Gatsby or Richard Diver. They were all projections of himself, and even when he is here trying to describe his own story in terms of the old, childish frustrations at Princeton, or the later disillusion of many unrewarding friendships, it is with a novelist's memory.

The confession helped, but like all confessions, it provided no cure. Above all, it rationalized for him the succession of events which had brought him to the unpleasant but compelling necessity of taking a distasteful job as a Hollywood hack. For a long time he had found it artistically dissatisfying to turn out the silly, stereotyped stories for which he had become famous, and which he sold for as much as $3,000 a piece to the *Saturday Evening Post*. By 1934 he had arrived at a point where it was physically nauseating to turn out any more stories on the *Post* pattern. About then a personal tragedy invaded his life, which he had to meet with a tremendous expenditure of money, as well as mental and emotional effort. Unable to recapture the initial inspiration which had produced the fine, opening chapters of "Tender Is the Night," but hard-pressed, as always, for cash, he heeded his publisher's plea and hastily completed the novel which he had not been able to finish for nine years. He knew it should have been good. It had been started more carefully, and with a surer control than "Gatsby." But it had disintegrated from an objective story into the unhappy personal record of his own misfortunes. Splitting its personality, like that of its lovely heroine, it had become two half-written novels loosely tied together. The confused, dull middle passages, and the story's distance in mood from the grim, depression atmosphere of 1934, contributed to its popular failure. After the lavish, easy success of the preceding decade, the disappointments of these successive experiences left Fitzgerald financially and emotionally bankrupt. Alcohol brought only partial escape, and there were certain obligations which his well-developed Romanist conscience could not overlook.

Like every other emotional affair which he had preciously experienced, he could not get over it until he had put it down on paper. Finally, in 1936, after explaining the confusions of the several preceding years to his own satisfaction in the pages of *Esquire* he departed unhapilly for Hollywood.

The next three years were spent working on movie scripts, among them "Winter Carnival" and "Three Comrades," and assisting twenty-one other members of the film colony's literati in the epic treatment of "Gone With the Wind." Between assignments he turned out a series of pot-boilers for *Esquire* which netted him only a fraction of the money he had once been able to demand from the *Post*. At length he regained a certain composure, and was persuaded to withdraw to the isolation of the San Fernando valley fringing the movie cities. There, quietly, and in the seclusion always necessary for his finest writing, he began the work on what might easily have been his best novel. But by then his body was exhausted, and he died at 44, leaving behind only a portion of his last great inspiration.

The closing year of his life, 1940, was also marked by a series of letters which he wrote to his daughter at college; many of them have been included here. They reveal far more about himself, unintentionally, than the rigorously probing and public relations of the "Crack-Up" assays. Together with the supplementary notes which Mr. Wilson has appended to his 1941 edition of the unfinished "The Last Tycoon," the letters furnished ample evidence, if it be longer needed, that the skillful prose which seemed to flow so spontantously from Fitzgerald was not merely a carelessly squandered gift, but rather the result of a conscious, thoughtful and painstaking craftsmanship.

Much of the secret of his skill lay in his intense love for romantic poetry, an affection in which the American novels which preceded him before the Other War were singularly lacking. Several of Fitzgerald's poems have been included among his notes in the present volume. Few of them were ever previously published, nor did they deserve it. Like many other good novelists, his attempts at verse were undistinguished doggerel. But unshackled by the confining conventions of metre and rhyme, he utilized in his prose the other elements of poetry to enrich his style and to set the many moods which reflect with increased intensity the emotional crises continually recurring in his stories.

"Poetry is the most concentrated form of style," he wrote to his daughter in 1940, when she was trying to pick her way among the myriad tempting courses of a college catalogue. "This job has given me part of the money for your tuition and it comes so hard that I hate to see you spend it on a course like English Prose since 1800. Anybody that can't read modern English prose by themselves is subnormal. The chief fault in your style is its lack of distinction—something which is inclined to grow with the years . . . The only sensible course for you at this moment is the one on *English Poetry—Blake to Keats*. I don't care how clever the other professor is, one can't raise a discussion of modern prose to anything above tea-table level. It is a course for Clubwomen who want to continue on from Rebecca and Scarlet O'Hara. . . .

"It isn't something easy to get started on by yourself," he wrote, continuing his theme, in a letter four days latter, and five months before his death. "You need, at the beginning, some enthusiast who also knows his way around—John Peale Bishop performed that office for me at Princeton. I had always "dabbled" in verse, but he made me see, in the course of a couple of months, the difference between poetry and non-poetry. After that, one of my first discoveries was that

some of the professors who were teaching poetry really hated it and didn't know what it was about. I got in a series of endless scraps with them and finally dropped English altogether. . . .

"Poetry is either something that lives like fire inside you—like music to the musician or Marxism to the Communist—or else it is nothing, an empty, formalized bore, around which the pedants endlessly drone their notes and explanations. *The Grecian Urn* is unbearably beautiful, with every syllable as inevitable as the notes in Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony,* or its just something you don't understand. It is what it is because an extraordinary genius paused at that point in history and touched it. I suppose I've read it a hundred times. About the tenth time I began to know what it was about, and caught the chime in it and the exquisite inner mechanics."

The rest of the pieces collected in the crack up include an excellent reminiscence of New York, hitherto unpublished, and two fine memorial poems by John Peale Bishop and Edmund Wilson, both of whom once worked with Fitzgerald on "The Nassau Lit" at Princeton. The letters written home by T. S. Eliot, John Dos Passos, Gertrude Stein, Thomas Wolfe, and Edith Wharton not only make good reading in themselves, but testify to the high regard held for his talent by contemporary writers of many differing points of view. Three appreciative essays by Glenway Westcott, Paul Rosenfeld, and Dos Passos, published earlier in leading literary periodicals, are also included. Probably John Peale Bishop's essay in the Winter, 1937, *Virginia Quarterly Review* has been omitted because it deals at great length with O'Hara and Hemingway; possibly because of the resentment Fitzgerald once showed for portions of it. O'Hara has, of course, already attested publicly to the debt he owes Fitzgerald. The latter's long, curious friendship with Hemingway has yet to be critically evaluated. At any rate, the Bishop essay, "The Missing All," should certainly be read in connection with the present volume, particularly for its discerning criticism of "Tender Is the Night."

For many of us who came of age during the last half-dozen years, and whose chief approach to the decade of 1919-1929 is through its literature, few writers have captured the surface glamour or described it with a more apparent veracity, or in better prose, than Scott Fitzgerald. Lacking Hemingway's compelling directness of style and Dos Passos' vast content, and his affection for the world of which he writes, Fitzgerald possessed more completely than either the ability to evolve and communicate an emotional mood.

Literary criticism during the past 15 years have given a minimum of sympathetic attention to the literature of the 1920's; although looking back over the arid waste of depression and war from a present perspective, that decade seems to have fostered practically all of the recent culture forces directing the main currents of contemporary American thought. In the intervening years more of the writing of the Twenties has been rejected or ignored. Several older critics, whose youth preceded the Jazz Age, and who were not a part of it, have recently attempted to discuss certain aspects of its literature. Their conclusions reveal it, generally, as an era of clever, precocious experimentation and curiosity, unfortunately based in large measure on a "literary fallacy." Some of the erstwhile expatriates, now disavowing their fealty to the Twenties, have contributed to this depreciation. Archibald Mac Leish, reprimanding his colleagues several years ago in the heat of certain and impending war, included leniency among the genation of writers whom he branded "the irresponsibles

As far back as 1925 Fitzgerald and his contemporaries had already been tagged with Gertrude Stein's timeless phrase, "the lost generation." By 1940 the tag, now grown to the proportion of a banner, was planted securely on Fitzgerald's freshly dug grave. Coming as it did on the brink of war, and the beginning of a new epoch, his sudden death in the public obscurity of Hollywood recalled all the unfulfilled promises and subsequent bitter disillusions of his own career and the years which encompassed it. Many of the newsmen commissioned to write his obituary in the Christmas week following his death found in the incident a convenient symbol marking the end of a lost generation of sad young men. Some among them who chose, like Westbrook Pegler, to herald his passing voluntarily, heaped upon his grave all of their anger and disappointment in the blasted confidence of their post-war I youth, so incredibly distant in spirit from the war mood of 1940, and so memorably described in Fitzgerald's novels.

Each of these successive events has contributed to the mistaken identification of Fitzgerald with the superficial follies, and the false scale of values of the 1920's. Unfortunately he has become the arch type of all the hollow men, the sad, lost youths of a wasted generation. They were prophets without a country, we are told, bored with the sordid Main Streets of their native land, and able to realize the noble aspects of life only in the cafés of Paris, along the Riviera, or on the velvet, tradition-haunted quads at Oxford. In condemning the writers of the '20's who presented so faithless a picture of America, certain writers like De Voto and Brooks may have forgotten that their own contemporaries, men such as T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, had established this point of view before the writers of Fitzgerald's generation began their work. How far he had progressed from this attitude is clearly stated in the following paragraph from a *Post* story which appeared on the local newsstands two weeks before the October, 1929 stock market crash sounded the knell of the Jazz Age:

"Watching the fading city, the fading shore, from the deck of the *Majestic,* he had a sense of overwhelming gratitude and gladness that America was there, that under the ugly debris of industry the rich land still pushed up, incorrigibly lavish and fertile, and that in the heart of the people the old generosities fought on, breaking out sometimes into fanaticism and excess but indominable and undefeated. There was a lost generation in the saddle at the moment but it seemed to him that the men coming on, the men of the war, were better, and all his old feeling that America was a bizarre accident, a sort of historical sport, was gone forever. The best of American was the best of the world.

"France was a land, England was a people, but American, having about it still the quality of an idea, was harder to utter—it was the graves at Shiloh, and the tired, drawn, nervous faces of its great men and the country boys dying in the Argonne for a phrase that was empty before their bodies withered. It was a willingness of the heart."

We will have need for other books like "The Crack-Up," edited as carefully and affectionately as Edmund Wilson has done here, before we can evolve a comprehensive, critical appreciation of the work of the Twenties, and of the writers who lived and worked through them. Memory, alone, has not been adequate. The Jazz Age still holds a challenge for the student or critic who seeks to equate it authoritatively, and to write on it without revealing more of his own ignorance and prejudice than his understanding.

ROLAND RYDER-SMITH—Largo

For fighter upon receipt
of message telling of
wife's unfaith.

Day is a squirrel cage for thought.
Weary, the bleeding paws of consciousness
pace
back and around,
around and back.
Better the foxhole's odorous expanses . . .
better the bloody mire, thigh-deep . . .
better the midnight's flack-lovely heaven
in full bloom . . .
better that all the thudding brick-a-brac
had heaped this head . . .
better the merciful pellets of forgive-and-forget
had targeted this abdomen . . .
Night is a tent to harbor madness in.
Each rancorous hour drags on,
its frozen minutes sculpted
to gargoyle shape,
its lava seconds gouging red furrows
on the brain.
Twin-edged, the pulses ax into warm flesh of dreams,
A satan-hand blots out the very moon,
A million demons lacquer the sunrise
black.
Day is a squirrel cage for thought . . .
Back and around,
around and back.

ALEX AUSTIN—Boy and A Bullfrog

Autumn is when Nature is the red haired belle of the Universe. The leaves fall and when you walk, you can hear the sound of them under your feet.

He had sold all his newspapers and he was going home now. His home in the World. He always went home when he sold all his newspapers. He walked slowly and you could hear the sound of the leaves under his feet. He seemed to find a kind of music in the crackling of the leaves. When he would reach a large pile of them, he would rustle through them, almost as if he were wading through a stream. It was his World for a while now anyway and he was going to make the most of it while it was his.

He saw other people in the World. They were all about him, and yet they seemed to be so very far away. Every one of them going somewhere. Not caring about him. Wondering where he was going. Perhaps they had all sold their newspapers and they were going home as he was. He would always wonder about that. People. The way they were. The way he was a part of them, and still so very far away. Maybe someday, he thought.

The other people in the World. The ones who were young and new to all of it the way he was. They were playing their games in the streets now. He heard their laughter and he saw them running from one place in the World to another, all of the time. They seemed to be so very much more alive than he was. Maybe they were supposed to be. He didn't know. It just seemed that they were so different, and yet it seemed to him that God had meant them to be the same. All of them. The same eyes. The same, small bodies. All of their laughing faces. They seemed to be so much the way he was, but there was no laughter in his eyes. Not like the other who ran on from one place in the World to another. There was something more than laughter in his eyes.

Paper, Mister? Read all about it. He shouted that. He never liked to shout, but they had told him that he had to shout to sell papers, so that he would be able to go home. Shouting. So loud. Read all about it. About what? He didn't know. He only shouted it out so that he would be able to go home. Read all about my shouting so that I can go home maybe.

There was no knowing. The World. The war that men fought. Fifty-thousand killed at such and such. Twenty-five thousand killed here. Didn't people ever stop killing each other. That seemed to be all that he ever had to shout about when he sold his papers.

But he was through with it again, and he would be able to go home now, sleep for a while, before going out into it all again, with the loud shouting and the people being killed. He wondered how many it would be tomorrow. Maybe he would be one of them tomorrow. You never know about that. He knew that. He heard someone say that to his sister, when his mother had died. He remembered everything that they had said that night his mother died. Sure. Extra. Read all about it. Ha. Ha.

He stopped when he came to the big street where the trolley cars and the buses ran. He stood on the corner and he waited for the light to change. Then the policeman blew the whistle and he motioned him to come across. Imagine —a policeman blowing his whistle for me, he thought. He liked to think of it that way.

He started across, while the cars and the trolleys and the buses stopped, but then, he stopped in the middle of the street. He stopped and he just looked out there ahead of him, as if there were something there that he did not understand. He stood there and he seemed to be listening for something. The policeman looked over at him for a moment, and then he walked to where the boy was standing.

The policeman asked him what was the matter and he said that he heard something that he had never heard before in his whole life. The policeman looked at him for a moment again and then he too seemed to be listening for something.

The cars and the buses and the trolleys blew their horns and the people inside of them were looking out of the windows and shouting out to the policeman that they did not have all the time in the World.

But the policeman didn't seem to hear the horns and the shouting about not having all the time in the World. He was listening with the small boy now, and somehow he seemed to be a small boy himself again. The two small boys standing there and listening for something.

A man got out of a taxicab and he came up to the policeman to tell him personally that he did not have all the time in the World and all of that, but before he said anything, he stopped and as he looked at the boy's face, he seemed to be listening for something too. Now it was three of them, and perhaps the rest of the World around them was wondering about it all.

A few more of them came out of the taxies and the buses and the trolleys and the cars, and they stood around the small boy and they seemed to listen for it too. The horns had stopped blowing and almost every person in the World who was there, seemed to be standing around the small boy, listening for something. All of them there. All of them being the small boy now. All of them seeming to be what they had never dreamt of every being again.

Then the boy bent down and he picked something up from the trolley tracks. He held it in his hand and they all crowded around to see this wonder that a small boy found on a trolley track, somewhere in a city in the World.

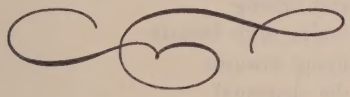
The boy looked up at the policeman and he smiled. It seemed to him that he had never smiled before and that this was the first time and the smile was more beautiful than any smile had ever been. A small boy's first smile in the World, and the policeman smiled back at him. All of the people smiled, and seeing them all smile this way, he wondered if he would ever have to shout loudly again about fifty thousand people being killed, somewhere in the World. It all seemed so right and beautiful to him now, and the people could see the tears that were in his eyes.

Only a bullfrog on the trolley tracks on a street, somewhere in a city in the World and all of this. The people smiling and a small boy, smiling for the

first time. Knowing what it was all like, after not having been born for so long a time. It was funny being born that way. It was almost tragically funny, but it was being born and that was what counted most of all.

The small boy walked on across the street with the trolley tracks. The people stood there and looked after him as he went. He turned to look at them again, and the people standing there had never seen the beauty that they were seeing now. The way he smiled and the way he seemed to hold back a saved up tear in his eye when he looked at them, with nothing but a wonderful bullfrog in his hand.

He smiled at them, and then he turned and walked on down the street. He was going somewhere in the World now and all of the people standing there knew that, because it is that way when a small boy smiles for the first time in the World and is born. All of the people there knew that, and not one of them had ever seen a bullfrog on a street in a city, somewhere in the World before.



Concerning the cover Flight from Shock, *our art editor suggests the following in regard to the shock of peace, which extends far beyond the cases of returning soldiers.*

On coming home from war;
Flight from shock
symbolism
of the mind
flying towards
pure abstraction
with geometrical
precision
and yet the mouth
a woman's pelvis
and mixing
brains with breasts
flying towards
the elemental
retreating from
reality
simultaneously
in diverse
directions
and leaving
normality
a vacuum.